

John “Footy” Kross, Miami Y100.7 radio personality; and Al Hoffman, finance chairman, Republican National Committee.

Telephone Remarks to the South Boston Saint Patrick’s Day Breakfast March 21, 2004

The President. Senator, this would be your President calling.

State Senator Jack Hart. President Bush, President Bush is on the line. How about a nice round of applause for President Bush? Happy Saint Patrick’s Day. What an honor.

The President. Yes, same to you, Jack. Thanks for letting me call in. I appreciate you taking my call.

Senator Hart. Any time, Mr. President, we’ll take your call any time, for crying out loud.

The President. Well, I’m proud of that. Listen, I want to thank Father Casey. I presume he’s got quite a few souls to save there in that crowd. [Laughter]

Senator Hart. There’s quite a few Democratic souls to save in this hall, Mr. President.

The President. I know you’ve got one—you invited at least one Republican, and that’s my friend the Governor.

Senator Hart. Yes, yes, he’s here. Mitt Romney is here. We were going to ask you, Mr. President, do you need a runningmate? [Laughter]

The President. Wait a minute.

Senator Hart. We like Dick Cheney and all, but we’d like for you to take the Governor to Washington, DC. [Laughter]

The President. Look, you’re lucky to have the guy. Here’s the way I like to put it about Massachusetts: I know there’s a lot of talk about a Massachusetts politician who has his eye on the Presidency. But tell Mitt it’s not open until 2008. [Laughter]

Senator Hart. Oh, you’re talking about—you had me stumped for a second there.

You’re talking about Senator Kerry, of course.

The President. Oh, no, no.

Senator Hart. Oh, my goodness.

The President. You mean the—well, never mind. [Laughter]

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank the speaker and the senate president. I miss my days as being the Governor. I loved dealing with our Lieutenant Governor and speaker and members of the statehouse and the State senate. And I wish you all the very best. I know you’re struggling with some big issues. But these are good, decent folks working for the people of Massachusetts to get some things done, and I appreciate, Jack, the spirit of this lunch.

Senator Hart. Well, thank you very much. We are certainly honored that you called, and we respect the job that you’re doing. We pray for you every day, Mr. President. You’re a good man, and we just wanted to wish you a very, very happy Saint Patrick’s Day.

The President. Same to you, sir, and I wish everybody a happy Saint Patrick’s Day as well. God bless, everybody. God bless our great Nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. from the Residence at the White House to breakfast participants meeting in Boston, MA. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Robert E. Casey, pastor, Saint Brigid’s Catholic Church, Boston, MA; Gov. Mitt Romney and Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey of Massachusetts; Thomas M. Finneran, speaker, Massachusetts State House of Representatives; and

Robert E. Travaglini, president, Massachusetts State Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Consolidated Report on
the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces
March 20, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In the interests of improving the efficiency of the reporting process and to increase the utility of reports to the Congress, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, I have decided to consolidate supplemental reports I provide to the Congress regarding the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped armed forces in a number of locations around the world. This consolidated report is part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about such deployments and covers operations in support of the global war on terrorism (including in Afghanistan), Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Haiti. Operations in Iraq are a critical part of the war on terror, and it is my intention to continue to provide, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, information regarding the deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq in the reports to the Congress under Public Law 107-243 and Public Law 102-1, as amended.

The Global War on Terrorism

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our global war on terrorism.

United States efforts in the campaign in Afghanistan continue to meet with success,

but as I have stated in my previous reports, the U.S. war on terror will be lengthy. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to eliminate the primary source of support to the terrorists who viciously attacked our Nation on September 11, 2001. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capability and virtually eliminating the Taliban's ability to brutalize the Afghan people and to harbor and support terrorists. Pockets of al-Qaida and Taliban forces, however, remain a threat to U.S. and Coalition forces and to the Afghan government and Afghan people. United States, Coalition, and Afghan forces are actively pursuing and engaging remnant Taliban and al-Qaida fighters.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002, continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 610 enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

In furtherance of the U.S. worldwide efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. For example, combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Georgia to assist in training and equipping the